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NEWS RELEASE

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Meeting With Second Circuit Court Judges **Latest in Series to Improve Understanding of Immigration Court System** *Discussions Related to Surge in Immigration Case Appeals to Judiciary*

NEW YORK – Senior representatives from the immigration court system met yesterday with judges from the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in Manhattan to exchange information on issues related to the surge of immigration cases reaching the circuit courts.

Yesterday's gathering was the latest in a series of meetings over the past 18 months between the federal courts and the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR), which encompasses the immigration court system within the Department of Justice. EOIR includes the nation's more than 200 immigration judges as well as the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA), which hears appeals from the decision of those judges. In addition to the Second Circuit, representatives of EOIR have initiated visits to the Courts of Appeals for the Third, Seventh, and Ninth Circuits since early last year. Federal judges also have addressed EOIR adjudicators at annual conferences of the immigration judges and the BIA.

At yesterday's meeting with Chief Judge John M. Walker, Jr. and other judges from the Second Circuit were BIA Chairman Lori L. Scialabba, BIA Acting Vice Chairman Juan P. Osuna, Acting Chief Immigration Judge David L. Neal, and Deputy Chief Immigration Judge Thomas L. Pullen.

As in the conversations with the other circuits, yesterday's meeting was a productive exchange of information concerning the nature of the cases in immigration proceedings, the procedures by which the BIA and the immigration judges conduct their work, recent changes to the administrative system, and the reasons behind the large increase in cases being appealed to federal court. While EOIR and the federal courts play different roles in adjudicating immigration cases, all have an interest in having the system work efficiently and in a way that ensures due process. The meetings with the federal courts have played a critical role in fostering understanding about the way cases move through the various adjudicatory stages.

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“These face-to-face discussions have been very important to enhance the federal judges’ understanding of our procedures and the volume of cases we handle,” Chairman Scialabba said. “We also are able to put into context our decision-making environment, particularly at the immigration court level. At the same time, we at EOIR have had an opportunity to hear from the judges about how they review our decisions that make it into federal court.”

During Fiscal Year 2005, the BIA, composed of 11 Board Members, completed more than 46,000 decisions, including cases and motions. The immigration judges completed more than 350,000 matters, which included more than 270,000 individual cases.

– EOIR –

EOIR is responsible for adjudicating immigration cases. Specifically, under delegated authority from the Attorney General, EOIR interprets and administers federal immigration laws by conducting immigration court proceedings, appellate reviews, and administrative hearings. EOIR consists of three components: the Office of the Chief Immigration Judge, which is responsible for managing the numerous immigration courts located throughout the United States where immigration judges adjudicate individual cases; the Board of Immigration Appeals, which primarily conducts appellate reviews of immigration judge decisions; and the Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer, which adjudicates immigration-related employment cases. EOIR is committed to providing fair, expeditious, and uniform application of the nation's immigration laws in all cases.

Information about EOIR immigration proceedings is available on EOIR’s website <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/press/subject.htm>.